



Tanya Lane  
Acting Town Manager

# TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET  
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

**MAYOR ROY ZARTARIAN**

## MINUTES

**SPECIAL MEETING – BUDGET REVIEW  
NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL  
Conference Room L-101 Lower Level – Town Hall  
7:00 P.M.**

**March 16, 2016**

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Mayor Zartarian called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

### **I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **II. ROLL CALL**

Councilor Anest  
Councilor Budrejko  
Councilor DelBuono  
Councilor Klett  
Councilor Manke  
Councilor Marocchini  
Councilor Nagel  
Councilor Serra  
Mayor Zartarian

### **Staff Attendees:**

Tanya Lane, Acting Town Manager  
Ann Harter, Finance Director  
Lisa Rydecki, Deputy Finance Director  
Bill DeMaio, Superintendent, Parks & Recreation  
Lisa Masten, Library Director  
Jamie Trevethan, Asst. to the Town Manager – Administration  
Linda Irish-Simpson, Clerk of the Council

### III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL

Diane Stamm, 104 Steeplechase Drive: She is President of the Library Board of Trustees and urged the Council to continue to support the Library. She felt any cuts should be done by the Director and that cuts should be made fairly throughout all departments.

Maureen Lyons, 37 Ledyard Road: She encouraged the support of the library and suggested outreach to daycare, preschools, Newington schools and assisted living facilities would be reduced. In the current economy all were expected to do more with less but hoped the Council realized the lost opportunities they would have with each cut.

Iris Larsson, 41 Buckingham Street, New Britain: She read a letter from Nicholas Bellantoni, Connecticut State Archeologist, who as a Town resident urged the Council to restore the \$60k in cuts. He felt they were unacceptable. He felt it would diminish the ability of the Library to purchase material and to have a wide variety of programs.

Laurel Goodgion, 30 Sequin Street: She has lived in Newington for 35 years and supported the return of the proposed cuts to the Library budget. She felt she got good value for the taxes she paid and felt they compared favorably to other communities in the area. The funding to the Library was two percent of the Town budget and provided a great deal for that amount of money since they served all sections of the community. There were only two areas that could be cut and that would be books or part time staff hours. Reduction of either would affect the public and services.

Michael Kiely, 64 Stuart Street: The services the Library offered were constantly increasing and felt all budget cuts should be decided by the Director of the Library since she knew best as to what the Library needed.

Anita Wilson, 278 Connecticut Avenue: She was in support of the budget and stated that when the Library budgeted for a zero percent increase, it actually meant the Library would lose. The cuts would result in fewer programs, less outreach, fewer online databases, and fewer materials purchased. The impact would be felt by all in Town and said any cuts should be made fairly across all departments in Town.

Judy Igielski, 23 Old Musket Drive: She read a letter received from Amanda Cefaratti, a former Newington student. She was in support of restoring the Library cuts and any cuts would be detrimental to the Town. She said the programs and services offered were crucial to the professional education of the residents of Newington. Mrs. Igielski was unable to read the entire letter in the three minutes allotted but was going to copy the letter for the entire Council to read.

Pam Raynock, 118 Harding Avenue: She thanked the Council for their efforts but felt the cuts to the Library would impact the ability to support students during the summer months for the summer reading program.

LeeAnn Manke, 112 Northwood Road: She supported the Library but appreciated the efforts of the Council. She said that reductions in the material budget would mean fewer titles added to the collection because in many cases four different formats were purchased for each title. Fewer online databases would be available for the public, job seekers and businesses. Librarians work hard to support people needing help using the databases and cuts would not enable them to do that. If staff was cut, there would not be staff that could monitor meeting rooms as they currently do. Other town departments collaborate to have programs and share resources, which the cuts would impact.

Ellen Vessella, 31 Northwood Road: She gave examples of the variety of people who used the Library and their needs for differing formats and urged support for restoring the cuts to the Library.

Eric Rothausser, 28 Partridge Drive: He asked for the \$60k to be restored to the Library. He said the money would be an investment for all residents and felt the money would be returned to the Town eventually through the people that were educated and who used the programs at the Library.

Anna Eddy, 41 Churchill Way: She focused on the Library cuts with regard to staffing. Many programs were delivered every year and if the cuts were not replaced, the programming would be cut by 25%. That

would mean 225 fewer programs and would impact everyone. The Library was a treasure in Town and needed to keep up with the expanded use of the Library. She felt any cuts would hurt the reputation of the Library and take a long time to build back.

Michael J. Fox, 1901 Main Street: He stated any cuts would affect his grandchildren who enjoyed taking books from the Library and hoped the cuts would be replaced. He was also in support of the Parks and Grounds budget.

Fred Googel, 15 Stagecoach Lane: He read a letter in support of the Library from Richard (inaudible), 19 Spruce Street. The Library should not become a casualty of the budget process and urged restoration of the cuts. Mr. Googel added he also felt the Library was a valuable asset and it was important when people were looking to move into Town.

Neil Ryan, 237 Brockett Street: As a member of the Board of Trustees, he felt the Library was a valuable asset and asked for full funding for the Library. If taxes needed to be increased, he was in favor since it was money well spent. He was also in favor of the Parks and Rec budget.

Clarke Castelle, 167 Connecticut Avenue: He indicated he had reviewed the actual budget manuals for previous years and found that in 13 years the Library had been shortchanged. During that timeframe the budget had increased 5.3% and if inflation was considered, it operated with much less money today. The Library's health was a strong measure of what a community valued. He urged the Council to be as generous as possible.

Eileen Francolino, 116 Lydall Road: She spoke in favor of both the Library and the Parks and Rec budgets. These both affect the entire Town and all residents. She suggested they look at any duplication of services that were offered by both and eliminate duplication.

Patty Foley, 51 Crown Ridge: She said the Library was the jewel of Newington and represented what the community was all about. Approximately 20k people use the library each month or about 700 people a day. The budget was the lowest, with inflation, and continued to shrink. She asked the Council to restore the proposed cuts.

Elisha Ortiz, 81 Ashland Avenue: As a student in Newington, he spoke in support of the library and all the help he got from the librarians on his science project and with computers. He attended the programs offered by the Library and hoped the money would be restored.

Leah Ortiz, 81 Ashland Avenue: She supported the Library and the help she received from librarians. The library was close to her house and was easy to walk to.

Kerri Noack, 29 Pheasant Run: He was in favor of the Library budget, found the staff helpful and thought the money would be well spent and should not be a place that was cut.

Fernandez Cruz, 395 Mountain Road: He volunteered at the Library and used the library as a place to study and enjoyed using it. He did not want the Library to lose money or to offer less. He asked for the budget to be restored.

(inaudible) Asar, 120 Patriot Lane: he said the Library was crucial to the Town and as a volunteer helped with younger children's programs. If cuts were made, he did not want these programs to be eliminated.

Kimberly Nguyen, 79 Highland Street: She was a volunteer at the Library and a senior at the High School. She felt cuts would negatively impact all families in Town and asked for the cuts to be restored.

Kevin Zvonarek, 168 Walsh Avenue: He said the Library was vital to connecting with students but also families. People from other towns attend programs at the Library and if cuts needed to be made, he asked they be spread out over all other departments.

(inaudible), 120 Patriot Lane: he spoke in favor of the library budget since he used it a great deal and thought it was wonderful to have the facility in Town. The budget cuts would not be good for the students or other children who wanted to have the same opportunity he had.

Mayor Zartarian read a letter from John Bachand, 56 Maple Hill Avenue in favor of the Library and the restoration of the cuts and felt it could be done by reducing the Board of Ed budget enough to make up for the proposed cuts. Newington students make up a large portion of the people using the Library and felt the suggestion was a fair approach.

Councilor DelBuono had received a letter from Havital Miltz, which she said concerned the Library but there were other items not related to the Library. She said she would read the letter at the next Council meeting because she did not want to misrepresent the letter by paraphrasing.

#### **IV. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS**

##### **A. Budget Review: Library**

Tanya Lane reviewed the proposed Library budget. The original budget called for a 4.8% increase and said the cuts that were made were very painful. She stated the cuts were shared across the board and the first cuts to the Library were very mindful of the needs. The cutting of part time hours from 19 to 15 was the easiest way to begin and would have the least impact on the Library. She stated her Department part time hours had also been cut from 19 to fifteen and it was painful. She and the Director had met to review the proposed cuts. The cutting of Thursday and Sunday hours would not be the correct approach and the proposed cuts included suggestions from the Director.

##### **Code 711**

8205 – decreased to reflect an increase in email notifications

8202 – increased due to downloadable subscriptions

##### **Code 712**

8101 – increased due to personnel changes and contractual step increases

8102 – increased due to salary increases and full time employees electing to work Sunday

8103 – has been in the Library since 2006 and never been used. Expense is absorbed by the BOE.

8401 – increased due to demand

Councilor DelBuono asked about overtime hours from authorized to requested. Mrs. Lane said the increase in salary amount was due to librarians electing to cover Sunday hours. It was a contractual obligation to offer the hours to the full time librarians first. The Director explained there were more hours and more money scheduled due to Sunday hours.

##### **Code 713**

8101 – reflects personnel increases

8102 – increased due to full time employees working Sunday

8103 – decrease reflect the reduction in hours of part time workers (19 – 15 hours)

8202 – decrease the number of databases and magazines

8401 – decrease in the number of books and downloadable material

##### **Code 714**

8103 – elimination of the monitor hours

Councilor Budrejko asked if there was an increase in vandalism and the Director explained the cut could result in an increase. The monitor walked around the building, did room set ups, checked meeting rooms, etc. She explained there were seven cameras in certain areas but privacy issues were a concern.

##### **Code 715**

8101 – 8103: reflects an increase in wages

8102 – full time employees working Sunday hours

Code 716

8102 – increase due to full time employees working Sunday hours

8103 – decrease reflects reduction in hours for library techs

Code 730

No changes to this line item.

Councilor Klett stated a resident was concerned about there being some overlapping between the Library and the Parks and Rec Department and whether or not that had been reviewed during the budget process. The Director indicated teen programs were free and that bus trips had not been discussed between departments. She stated they were collaborating on kindergarten orientation with Human Services, Library and the Board of Education and did programming at the Senior Center as well. Tanya Lane stated they would look into the duplication of programming between departments.

Councilor Nagel asked about the collection of money from overdue books and who received that money. The Director indicated the money went to the general fund and not to the Library. The total amount collected was \$19k. She explained that the Library charter did not allow for the charging of programs because a lot of people could not afford to attend if there was a charge.

## **B. Budget Review: Parks and Recreation/Grounds**

Code 810

8105 – eliminated to reflect retirement

8103 – includes a new clerical part time position

Councilor Anest asked what the new position would entail and was told by Mr. DeMaio it was a 15-20 hour a week job and could hire a couple of college students. A new software package was being installed and would take a lot of effort to get it up and running. He hoped the residents would be able to register for programs from home starting May 1.

Code 831

8101 – reflects step increases

8103 – outsourced a part time custodial position, which is now in the Facilities budget.

8104 – decrease to trend

8302 – 8304 – 8306: cut to trend

8402 – purchase of a leaf blower and landscape trailer

Code 832

8102 – reduced to reflect trend

8213 – reduced to reflect trend

8302 – increase for construction materials

8402 – increase reflects purchase of a soil stone compactor

8406 – reduced since the new building is fully equipped

Code 833

No changes

Councilor Klett indicated the dollar amount for building improvements was low and asked why. Mrs. Harter indicated the trend was that the money was budgeted each year and not spent and would remind the Facilities Manager the money was there to be spent. Councilor Nagel said that major improvements were done through Facilities and minor items were done through Parks and Rec.

Code 834

No changes

Councilor Klett asked about the sharing of a tree warden with Wethersfield, and Mr. DeMaio stated about \$25k (\$1k a day) was spent renting the tree crew and equipment for large trees during the year. This saved the Town a lot of money through this program.

### **C. Budget Review: Miscellaneous Programs Not Previously Discussed**

No changes

Mrs. Lane asked the Council that any changes they made be given to her office by Monday morning so Mrs. Harter could apply the changes to the spreadsheet. She indicated on March 22, at the Town Council meeting changes could be made to the budget. A public hearing for the Mayor's presentation of the budget would be held on March 31 and a vote on the budget would be made on April 5.

Councilor Manke asked about state cuts to funding and Mrs. Lane had not heard of anything.

## **V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Scott Greczkowski, 46 Miami Avenue: He indicated a lot of the costs involved with the Library related to the union. He asked when there would be a renegotiation of the contract and thought the contractual hours of 9 – 5 p.m. should be negotiated to be more flexible according to when the Library was busiest. He also said the Library should get the money received from fines.

Diane Stamm, 104 Steeplechase Drive: She felt it was important to understand that the Library had a Budget Committee who was tasked with meeting the zero increase request. The committee thought by cutting Sunday hours it was the easiest way to provide all the services across the board.

Natalie Harvestin, 319 Lloyd Street: She felt the Parks and Rec Department needed to make Churchill Park ADA compliant but felt there should be some fairness in the budget. She said it was time for one of the large departments to be told No.

## **VI. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS**

Councilor Marocchini said the amount budgeted last year was spent along with an additional \$24k. He said the Council was taking away things to fund salaries. He felt cuts would be difficult for the Library to maintain services. Councilor DelBuono asked Mrs. Harter about certain line items and an explanation was given.

Councilor Klett asked for the Council to be given a copy of the Library contract from Mrs. Lane. Mrs. Lane indicated they were currently negotiating with the union.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Councilor Marocchini moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. and the motion was seconded by Councilor Klett. The motion was passed 9 – 0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Irish-Simpson  
Clerk of the Council

Cc: T. Lane, Town Clerk